

N<sup>o</sup> 7. *Monday, December 26.*

THE Practice of *Libelling*, as I have already observed, is of very dangerous Consequence to any Government; especially when the Poignancy of the *Libel* is directed against Majesty itself; for as the Maxim of our Law, that *the King can do no wrong*, has no other Meaning, than that his *Ministers* ought to be accountable for all Mismanagement and Male-Administration, so it is highly unreasonable to point any Reflections against the Prince himself; notwithstanding which, it is observable, upon a Review of the Histories of most Reigns, that *great Ministers* commonly shew less Uneasiness at any Invektives against their *Masters* than against *Themselves*. There is visibly some Policy in This; since every Body, who does not wish for the total Subversion of the Constitution, will resent any Attempts against the sacred Person of the King; whereas Complaints against his Ministers, when well grounded, ought not to be look'd upon in the same Light. I would not have these Observations applied to a late *infamous Parallel*, publish'd in one of the *Journals*; the Author of which is supposed to have been, lately, a *secret Friend* to some Men in Power.—But I am diverted from pursuing this Argument any farther, at present, by the following Letter, which will admit of no Delay.

To CALEB D'ANVER'S, Esq;

S I R,

MY Curiosity carried me, last *Wednesday*, to be present at one of Mr. *Henly's* academical Orations; which I had heard so much and so

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differently talk'd of. I must do that ingenious Divine the Justice to say, that I think his Undertaking a very useful one, as he conveys a great deal of philological and critical Learning in a Language, that every Body understands, and in a very clear and plain Method. His Subject that Day was *HORACE*; upon which he mentioned several Particulars, to which I was before a Stranger; expatiating in the handsomest Manner on the Excellencies of that *great Man*, and at the same Time disguising none of his Failings.

I will endeavour to recollect some of the Passages; and perhaps you may not think them unworthy of being inserted in your Paper.

After having given an Account of *Horace's* Parentage, and the Place of his Birth, which are too well known to be repeated, he took Occasion to commend his Writings, the Purity of his Style, and that *curiosa felicitas* so peculiar to him. He then entered into the Description of his *Person* and *Character*; observing that he call'd himself, pleasantly enough, *Epicuri de grege Porcum*; i. e. a Swine of *Epicurus's* Herd; from whence he inferred that he was somewhat fat and very dirty. In another Place, he says, *Non ego paucis offendar maculis*; which is, that he did not value a few dirty Spots. From these two Passages he said it was manifest, that *Horace* was little better than a *Sloven*. It appear'd likewise from himself, that his *Fortune* was originally very small, but that he increas'd it considerably, even beyond his own Expectations.

*Hoc erat in votis, modus agri non ita magnus;  
Dii melius fecere.*

*A small bit of Land would once have contented me;  
but thank God, it is better with me now.*

Mr.

Mr. Henly farther observed, that it was a vulgar Error to think that *Horace* was never married; for that the learned *Heinsius* asserts, that he married a Woman of *Lombardy*, of a considerable Fortune; *uxorem è gente Longobarda locupletiorè duxit.*

As to his *Manners*, they seem to have been loose and obscene; for *Petrus Crinitus*, whom the learned Dr. Be—ly falsely imagines to be the ingenious Dr. Ha—e, says in his *Life of Horace*, *Moribus dicitur fuisse subobsœnis & ad bilem excitator*; that is, lewd and choleric. *Augustus* calls him *Homuncionem lepidissimum*; that is, a comical, little, laughing Fellow, and a great Lover of *Bawdry*; which appears from many of his *Epodes*, particularly that to his Mistress *Nedera*, which he made no Scruple of singing, before Women of the first Quality. It begins thus.

*Nox erat, & cœlo fulgebat Luna sereno.*

Which, translated by a modern Poet, is as follows,

Go to Joan Glover,  
And tell her I love her,  
And by the Light of the Moon I'll come and shove her.

That *Horace* was parsimonious, not to say, sordidly covetous, is plain from many of his own Writings; as for Instance, where he invites *Mecœnas* to sup with him, who was both first Minister, and his particular Patron. He plainly tells him that he shall have nothing but bad Wine, and Cabbage, and in little Glasses; and that he had taken Care of the Wine himself; from which appears too that he kept no Servant.

*Vile potabis modicis Sabinum  
Cantharis, Græca quod ego ipsa Testa  
Conditum levi.*

He kept the Key of his Cellar himself, and his Wine, till in all Probability, it was sour.

*Est mihi nonum Superantis annum  
Plenus albani cadus.*

Thus much as to his *personal* Qualities, and *private* Life. As for the Figure he made in *Publick*, it appears that, though he set out but low, he grew almost at once very considerable; his first Appearance being under *Brutus*; where we find him *Tribunus Militum*; in the Translation of which the Learned differ; but I think it answers best to what we call, *Exempt of the Beef-Eaters*. He lost his Post but oddly, as may be collected from the following Expression, *relieta non bene Parmula*. Madam Dacier informs us, that he was *Scriba questorius*, which she calls *Secrétaire de l'Epargne*, and may proper'y enough be rendered *Secretary of the Treasury*. After this, *Asinius Pollio* assures us, that he was sent Ambassador to *Gaul*, *Legatus apud Gallos missus fuit*, *Manlio & Daio Coss.*

When he had made some Stay, and Figure in that Court, *Quintilian* observes of him, in his tenth Book and first Chap. that he began to grow somewhat *cleaner and sprucer*, and that he applied himself to the *Knowledge of Men and Manners*; *Multo est tersior ac purus magis Horatius & ad notandos hominum mores præcipuus*. It was probably during this Stay of his in *Gaul*, that the *Secretaries of State* sent to him to return with all speed, upon Affairs of the utmost Consequence to the *Publick*.

*De Re communi Scribæ, magna atque nova Te  
Orabant bodie meminisses, Quinte, reverti.*

There seems at this Time to have been some Design of making him *Secretary of State*, from that noted Passage in a Letter from *Augustus* to *Mecænas*, *Veniet igitur & nos in scribendis Epistolis adjuvabit*; but he never attained to this Employment, which is imputed to his extreme *Modesty*.

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These are the most remarkable Passages I can recollect of that most *elegant Oration*, pronounced on *Wednesday* last by Mr. *Henly*. His Action, which *Demosthenes* says is the chief Part of an Orator, was extremely just and proper, and added a Grace and Dignity to all he utter'd. Such was the Modulation of his Voice, that it enchanted our Ears, and seem'd more like Musick than Speaking!—How laudable is it to see Mr. *Henly* chusing to employ his Talents in Praises and Commendations of the *great Men of Antiquity*, rather than meanly stooping to flatter Those of the *present Age*; but though he will not flatter them, he scorns (however provok'd) to attack them by any indirect or oblique Strokes of Satire, as most evidently appears by the foregoing Discourse.

The Application of Passages of the *Roman* Story to our Times is become so common and trite a Way of satirizing the Persons of the present Age, that no Man, who has a tolerable Genius, or the least Invention of his own, will condescend to do it. How easy is it to turn over *Tully*, *Tacitus*, or *Livy*, and when you have found a good strong Sentence or two upon *Corruption*, to insert it in any Paper? The Author need never be at the Trouble to make the Application. Every Child in the Street knows well enough upon whom to fix it. I should be glad therefore if what I have said would put an End to such pitiful Ribaldry; and if I can persuade Those, who have Talents, to give great Men their Deserts, as Mr. *Henly* has now done, I shall have gained my End.

C.

*I am, S I R, &c.**Friday,*